

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 QUITO 01751 122237Z

15

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 122130Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4781
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

S E C R E T QUITO 1751

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO CIA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT EC

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE COUP IN ECUADOR

1. AFTERNOON MARCH 12 POLCOUNS CALLED ON FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AND PROMINENT LOCAL COLUMNIST JULIO PRADO VALLEJO AT LATTER'S REQUEST. PRADO SAID HE WANTED USG TO BE AWARE THAT THERE WAS A SUBVERSIVE PLOT AFOOT TO UNSEAT PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LED BY GENERAL LATORRE. HE THEN REVIEWED THE STATE OF PLAY VERY MUCH ALONG THE LINES WE ARE ALREADY AWARE (E.G. THAT COUP HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR NIGHT OF MARCH 11/12, THAT LATORRE HAD ASKED FOR 48 HOUR GRACE PERIOD, ETC.) ONLY NEW WRINKLE PROVIDED BY PRADO WAS THAT LATORRE WANTED 200,000 SUCRES (US \$8,000) FOR TANK COMMANDER AND 800,000 SUCRES (US \$32,000) FOR HIMSELF TO COVER RETIREMENT BONUS HE WOULD SURELY LOSE IF COUP FAILS. PRADO SAID HE AND HIS GROUP WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM RAISING MONEY, ESPECIALLY IN GUAYAQUIL WHERE BUSINESS INTERESTS THOROUGHLY DIS- ENCHANTED WITH REGIME, BUT THAT THIS HAD NOT YET BEEN DONE

BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE COUP WOULD SUCCEED.

2. PRADO SAID HE THOUGHT LATORRE WAS FAILING IN HIS ATTEMPT TO GENERATE SUPPORT WITHIN MILITARY FOR COUP. HE SAID HE WAS NONETHELESS VERY SYMPATHETIC TO IDEA ON THE CONDITION

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THAT LATORRE PROMISED TO TURN POWER OVER TO ELECTED PRESIDENT

WITHIN A YEAR WHICH LATORRE HAS APPARENTLY DONE. PRADO SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS GOE HAS VERY LITTLE SUPPORT LEFT EXCEPT FOR COMMUNISTS WHO WERE PLANNING A MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION TO CELEBRATE PRESIDENT'S RETURN FROM ALGIERS, BUCHAREST AND CARACAS. AS EXAMPLE OF COMMUNIST SUPPORT FOR REGIME, PRADO CITED EXAMPLE OF RECENT VISIT TO HIS HOUSE BY SOVIET COUNSELOR WHO HAD ASKED HIM WHY HE (PRADO) DID NOT SUPPORT GOVERNMENT.

3. PRADO ALSO SHOWED POLCOUNS SOME DOCUMENTS WHICH HE SAID WOULD INCRIMINATE REGIME. TWO WERE XEROX COPIES OF GOE LISTS OF NEWSMEN ON GOVERNMENT PAYROLL AND THE MONTHLY AMOUNT EACH RECEIVES. (EMBASSY WAS PREVIOUSLY IN POSSESSION OF SIMILAR DOCUMENTS). THE OTHER WAS A XEROX OF A LETTER FROM SECGEN FOR ADMINISTRATION GENERAL AGUIRRE TO THE MINISTER OF FINANCE REQUESTING URGENT TRANSFER OF 15 MILLION SUCRES (US \$600,000) TO PRESIDENCY FOR EXPENSES DURING PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN TOUR. PRADO COMMENTED THAT THIS REGIME WAS NOW DEMONSTRABLY MORE CORRUPT THAN ITS PREDECESSOR.

4. POLCOUNS TOLD PRADO WHAT WE HAD ALREADY TOLD OTHER CIVILIAN COUP PLOTTER PABLO DAVALOS, I.E. THAT WE WERE CERTAIN GOE KNEW OF THESE COUP PLANS. PRADO SAID HE ASSUMED THIS TO BE THE CASE BUT HE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY HADN'T PICKED UP LATORRE AND ASSUMED IT WAS BECAUSE GOVERNMENT WAS DIVIDED OVER WHAT TO DO.
BREWSTER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, PLOTS, CAT-C, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975QUITO01751
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750087-0536
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750358/aaaacaap.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS; EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <11 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE COUP IN ECUADOR
TAGS: PINT, EC, (LATORRE), (DAVALOS, PABLO), (PRADO, JULIO V)
To: STATE GUAYAQUIL
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006